

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

**Subject**

Design Standards for County Facilities and Property

**Policy  
Number**

G-15

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**Purpose**

To establish general principles and objectives for the design, construction and improvement of owned or leased County facilities and property.

**Background**

In January 1990, the Board of Supervisors adopted a policy and work program for space requirements that recognized the need for centralized, prudent management of County property and facilities. A significant issue identified by the Board was the need to establish design standards for County facilities that set forth appropriate techniques, materials and technology to improve public accessibility, energy performance, resource utilization, and the work environment. An additional critical consideration is the need to balance capital cost requirements with operating and maintenance costs.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. Design guidelines and standards shall be established for County owned and leased facilities to promote the following objectives:
  - a. Provide safe, functional, aesthetically pleasing facilities at a reasonable cost.
  - b. Maximize flexibility to easily accommodate changes in use, configuration and/or occupants of a facility. Utilize open office design whenever appropriate and feasible. Where possible, include opportunities for multiple and after hour use of suitable facilities.
  - c. Provide features that promote client convenience and access, including clear directions and signage and grouping of related activities.
  - d. Ensure the safety and security of employees and the public, including measures to prevent or reduce unauthorized or undesirable activities, and adequate measures to prevent injury to employees and the public.
  - e. Provide maximum accessibility and safety for handicapped employees and members of the public.
  - f. Promote aesthetic considerations in interior and exterior building design, including public art and landscaping.
  - g. Include features that promote employee physical and mental fitness, where practical.

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2. Maximize the exterior and interior life of facilities while considering facility design and construction costs.
  - a. Set standards for the use of fixtures to maintain a maximum 50 lumen for lighting within buildings.
  - b. Set guidelines for selection of appropriate finishes, materials and equipment that balance acquisition costs with maintenance requirements. Emphasize longevity and excellent value in the selection of materials and equipment.
  - c. Maximize the use of quality exterior and interior furnishings and equipment to promote ergonomic features and quiet, efficient workplaces. Recognize color as an important design element and consider its effect on behavior and performance.
3. Set environmental standards that maximize energy/resource conservation and efficiency, while providing a comfortable, efficient work environment for building occupants.
  - a. Require compliance with the 68 degree heating and 78 degree cooling ranges.
  - b. Maximize the use of natural resources, including air/wind, solar heat and light, and landscaping, in the design of heating, air conditioning, ventilation and lighting systems, without compromising the comfort and efficiency of employees and the public.
  - c. Achieve maximum energy conservation and efficiencies, through use of natural and energy efficient cogeneration systems, photovoltaic, lighting controllers, occupancy sensors or other technological improvements.
  - d. Provide flexibility in mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems whenever practical, in order to accommodate future interior changes.
  - e. Require energy efficiency compliance for all heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
  - f. Design new facilities and major renovations for sustainability, resource conservation, and maintenance and operations efficiencies.
4. Promote recycling and conservation of resources, and incorporate methods and systems for recycling solid and liquid waste, into the planning of County facilities.
  - a. Use building and finishing products, which contain recycled materials into County facilities where feasible.
  - b. Promote recycling/reuse of building and construction demolition materials whenever possible, in accordance with the County's Construction and Demolition Ordinance.

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- c. Implement landscaping designs that emphasize water conservation through the use of drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, native compatible with the surrounding area for new, County-owned properties and projects. Landscape designs shall comply with the County's landscaping standards (Zoning Ordinance Sections 6712, et seq., or as amended), including water conservation requirements. Active-use parks may be exempted from this section for the use of turf grass.
  - d. Incorporate solid waste recycling stations/facilities into all future office designs.
- 5. The Chief Administrative Officer shall establish design standards and guidelines, which implement the preceding goals and objectives. The guidelines and standards shall be reviewed and modified periodically in order to take advantage of changing technologies and systems.
  - a. The Chief Administrative Officer shall direct County departments to collaborate on an as-needed basis on material selections, methods, and specifications that help achieve these goals and objectives.
  - b. The Chief Administrative Officer, or his designee, shall communicate and provide these standards to all affected County offices and departments, as well as consultants, developers, and contractors involved in the planning, acquisition, improvement, or construction of County facilities.

**Sunset Date**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12/31/2009.

**Board Action**

12/14/93 (50)  
12/09/1997 (19)  
11/06/2001 (4)  
3/21/2007 (4)  
07/24/2007 (13)

**CAO Reference**

- 1. Department of General Services
- 2. Department of Parks and Recreation